

# Pregnancy-Safe Home Air Quality Checklist

A room-by-room guide to identifying and eliminating hidden air quality threats before your baby arrives.  
Backed by research, designed for expecting families.

- 90%** of our time is spent indoors
- 5x** indoor air can be more polluted than outdoor air
- 72%** of homes contain detectable VOC levels
- 1 in 15** US homes has elevated radon levels

## WHY THIS MATTERS DURING PREGNANCY

Developing lungs are especially vulnerable to airborne pollutants. Exposure during pregnancy has been linked to low birth weight, preterm delivery, and childhood respiratory issues. This checklist helps you take control.

## How to Use This Checklist:

1. Go room by room through your home
2. Check off items you have already addressed
3. Flag items that need attention
4. Use the priority guide at the end to tackle the most important issues first
5. Book a professional inspection for anything you cannot assess yourself

## [\*] THE NURSERY

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- Test for VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds)**  
*New furniture, paint, and flooring off-gas chemicals. Use low-VOC products and ventilate for 2+ weeks before baby arrives.*
- Check humidity levels (aim for 30-50%)**  
*High humidity promotes mold growth. Use a hygrometer to monitor and a dehumidifier if needed.*
- Inspect for visible mold around windows and walls**  
*Check corners, window sills, and behind furniture. Any visible mold should be professionally remediated.*
- Ensure proper ventilation**  
*Open windows daily for 15-30 minutes when weather permits. Consider a HEPA air purifier rated for the room size.*
- Remove or wash all new textiles before use**  
*New bedding, curtains, and clothing can contain formaldehyde and other chemical finishes.*
- Check crib and furniture materials**  
*Solid wood with low-VOC finish is safest. Avoid pressed wood/MDF which off-gases formaldehyde.*
- Install a carbon monoxide detector**  
*Place one within 15 feet of the nursery. Test monthly and replace batteries every 6 months.*
- Vacuum with HEPA filter weekly**  
*Standard vacuums recirculate fine particles. HEPA filters capture 99.97% of particles 0.3 microns or larger.*

### PRO TIP

Finish all nursery renovations at least 4-6 weeks before your due date. This gives VOCs time to off-gas and allows you to ventilate the room thoroughly.

## [H] KITCHEN & LIVING AREAS

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- Test gas appliances for CO leaks  
*Gas stoves, ovens, and heaters can leak carbon monoxide. Have them inspected annually by a qualified technician.*
- Use range hood when cooking (vented to outside)  
*Cooking generates PM2.5 particles and NO2. Always use exhaust ventilation, not just recirculating fans.*
- Check for lead paint (homes built before 1978)  
*Lead paint is especially dangerous for developing babies. Test with a home kit or hire a certified inspector.*
- Replace HVAC filters every 60-90 days  
*Use MERV 11-13 rated filters. Higher ratings capture more particles but may reduce airflow in older systems.*
- Clean or replace dryer vent  
*Clogged dryer vents can cause CO buildup and are a fire hazard. Clean annually.*
- Inspect fireplace and chimney  
*Wood-burning fireplaces release PM2.5 and CO. Have chimney cleaned annually. Consider switching to electric.*
- Check for radon in living areas  
*Radon is the #2 cause of lung cancer. Test kits are available at hardware stores or hire a professional.*
- Remove shoes at the door  
*Shoes track in pesticides, lead dust, and other pollutants. Keep a shoe rack by the entrance.*

### DID YOU KNOW?

Cooking on a gas stove without ventilation can produce NO2 levels that would be illegal outdoors. Always run your range hood or open a window when using gas appliances.

## [B] BEDROOMS & BATHROOMS

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- Check for mold in bathroom grout and caulking  
*Bathrooms are the #1 location for mold growth. Re-caulk if you see black spots. Run exhaust fan for 30 min after showers.*
- Ensure bathroom exhaust fan vents outside  
*Many fans just recirculate air. Check that yours vents to the exterior, not into the attic.*
- Wash bedding weekly in hot water (130F+)  
*Kills dust mites and removes allergens. Use fragrance-free, hypoallergenic detergent.*
- Replace pillows every 1-2 years  
*Old pillows accumulate dust mites, mold spores, and body oils that degrade air quality.*
- Check under sinks for leaks and mold  
*Even small leaks create moisture that promotes mold growth. Fix immediately and dry thoroughly.*
- Avoid plug-in air fresheners and scented candles  
*These release VOCs and particulate matter. Use essential oil diffusers sparingly or open windows instead.*
- Test bedroom radon levels (especially ground floor)  
*Radon concentrations are highest in lower levels. Test each bedroom separately.*

## [G] BASEMENT & GARAGE

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- Test radon levels (highest priority in basements)  
*Radon enters through foundation cracks. If levels exceed 4 pCi/L, install a mitigation system.*
- Check for water intrusion and moisture  
*Damp basements are mold factories. Use a dehumidifier to keep humidity below 50%.*
- Store chemicals in sealed containers away from living areas  
*Paint, solvents, and pesticides off-gas even when sealed. Keep in a ventilated garage or shed.*
- Seal the door between garage and living space  
*Car exhaust contains CO and benzene. Weatherstrip the door and never idle in an attached garage.*

## [!] PRIORITY ACTION GUIDE

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### URGENT (Do This Week):

- Test for radon (especially if pregnant or planning)
- Install CO detectors near bedrooms
- Check gas appliances for leaks
- Fix any visible mold immediately

### IMPORTANT (Do This Month):

- Replace HVAC filters
- Test for VOCs in nursery
- Check bathroom ventilation
- Remove plug-in air fresheners

### ONGOING (Monthly Habits):

- Vacuum with HEPA filter weekly
- Wash bedding in hot water weekly
- Open windows for ventilation daily
- Monitor humidity levels
- Run exhaust fans when cooking/showering

## Want Professional Certainty?

A DIY checklist is a great start, but some threats are invisible without professional equipment. PureNest inspectors test for radon, VOCs, mold spores, PM2.5, CO, and allergens with lab-grade instruments.

**Book your free consultation at [purenestair.com](https://purenestair.com)**

*Disclaimer: This checklist is for educational purposes only and does not replace professional air quality testing. PureNest recommends a professional inspection for comprehensive assessment. Consult your healthcare provider about specific concerns related to air quality and pregnancy.*